

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. (Currently Amended) A method implemented in a computing device of ~~obtaining a password from a user~~ performing a password-protected secure function, said method comprising:

storing authentication indicia recognized by ~~said a~~ a user in ~~said a~~ a memory of the computing device; and

receiving a command to execute a password-protected secure function;

prompting a the user to enter ~~said a~~ a password associated with the secure function by

displaying a password entry screen containing ~~said the~~ the authentication indicia responsive to receiving the command; and

executing the password-protected secure function based on the validity of the password entered by the user.

2. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein storing authentication indicia recognized by said user in said computing device comprises storing said authentication indicia in a security module.

3. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein displaying said password entry screen containing said authentication indicia comprises displaying said authentication indicia for a limited time.

4. (Original) The method of claim 1 further comprising obtaining said authentication indicia from said user.

5. (Original) The method of claim 1 further comprising halting programs running on said computing device not necessary for inputting said password while said password entry screen is displayed.

6. (Currently Amended) A method implemented by a security module in a computing device of ~~obtaining a password from a user~~ performing a password-protected secure function, said method comprising:

receiving a command at a security module in the computing device to execute a

password-protected secure function stored on the computing device;

prompting a user to enter ~~said a~~ a password associated with the secure function by

displaying a password entry screen on a display;

halting programs not needed by ~~said the~~ the security module from executing while ~~said the~~ password entry screen is displayed;

~~obtaining said~~ receiving the password associated with the secure function from ~~said the~~ user;

removing ~~said the~~ the password entry screen from ~~said the~~ display; and

restarting halted programs after ~~said the~~ the password entry screen is removed from said the display.

7. (Original) The method of claim 6 wherein halting programs not needed by said security module while said password entry screen is displayed comprises inhibiting an operating system in said computing device from responding to interrupts not associated with said security module.

8. (Original) The method of claim 6 wherein halting programs not needed by said security module while said password entry screen is displayed comprises inhibiting context-switching by an operating system in said computing device to programs not needed by said security module.

9. (Original) The method of claim 6 wherein halting programs not needed by said security module while said password entry screen is displayed comprises:

storing a status table in random access memory used by an operating system in said computing device, each entry in said status table relating to a currently executing program and containing a status indication associated with said currently executing program;

saving current settings of said status table; and

changing said current settings so as to inhibit execution by said operating system of said programs not needed by said security module.

10. (Original) The method of claim 6 wherein halting programs not needed by said security module while said password entry screen is displayed comprises:

storing an alternate status table in random access memory used by an operating system in said computing device, each entry in said alternate status table relating to a program needed by said security module;

instructing said operating system to use said alternate status table while said password entry screen is displayed.

11. (Currently Amended) A device for ~~inputting a confidential password~~ executing a password-protected secure function comprising:

a secure processor configured to receive a command to execute a password-protected secure function, and to ~~executing~~ execute a password program to obtain a password associated with the password-protected secure function from a user responsive to receiving the command;

memory operatively connected to ~~said~~ the secure processor ~~storing~~ and configured to store authentication indicia recognized by a the user of ~~said~~ the device;

a display operatively connected to ~~said~~ the secure processor to display a password entry screen containing ~~said~~ the authentication indicia; and
the secure processor configured to execute the password-protected secure function based on the validity of the password entered by the user.

12. (Original) The device of claim 11 further comprising a smart card containing said secure processor and said memory.

13. (Original) The device of claim 11 further comprising a security lock program executed by said secure processor to inhibit execution of programs not needed by said secure processor to obtain said password from said user.

14. (Original) The device of claim 13 wherein said security lock program inhibits an operating system from responding to interrupts not associated with said secure processor while said password entry screen is displayed.

15. (Original) The device of claim 13 wherein said security lock program inhibits an operating system from context-switching while said password entry screen is displayed.

16. (Original) The device of claim 13 wherein said security lock program inhibits execution of programs not needed by said secure processor to obtain said password from said user.

17. (Original) The device of claim 16 wherein said security lock program inhibits execution of programs not needed by said secure processor to obtain said password from said user by changing settings in a status table used by an operating system while said password entry screen is displayed.

18. (Original) The device of claim 16 wherein said security lock program inhibits execution of programs not needed by said secure processor to obtain said password from said user by causing an operating system to use an alternate status table while said password entry screen is displayed.

19. (Currently Amended) A device for performing secure transactions, said device comprising:

memory ~~storing~~ configured to store authentication indicia recognized by a user of said device;

a secure processor programmed to:

receive a command to execute a secure transaction;

prompt said user to enter a password associated with performing the secure transaction

by displaying a password entry screen containing said authentication indicia; and

~~perform said~~ execute the password-protected secure transaction ~~following entry of said~~

~~password by said user~~ based on the validity of the password entered by the user.

20. (Previously Presented) The device of claim 19 wherein said secure processor and said memory are contained within a removable security module.

21. (Previously Presented) The device of claim 20 wherein said removable security module comprises a smart card.